

Indie Animation: From Crowdfunding to Schools with the Gods on Mount Olympus

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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)...page 2

[Chapter 1: The Indie Animation Boom and Crowdfunded Animation](#)...pages 3-9

[Chapter 2: The Indie Animation Boom Continues in 2022](#)...pages 10-19

[Chapter 3: The Promise of Rad Sechrist's "Project City"](#)...pages 20-26

[Chapter 4: An Alternative to the Studio System?: Indie Animation Forges Ahead](#)...pages 27-44

[Chapter 5: Gods' School Review](#)...pages 45-51

[Concluding Words](#)...page 52

Introduction

This e-book consists of five chapters. The first three are: “[The Indie Animation Boom and Crowdfunded Animation](#),” “[The Indie Animation Boom Continues in 2022](#),” “[The Promise of Rad Sechrist’s ‘Project City’](#).” Other chapters are “[An Alternative to the Studio System?: Indie Animation Forges Ahead](#)” (Chapter 4) and “[Gods' School Review](#)” (Chapter 5), along with concluding words I wrote [in August 2023](#). As a warning, there are spoilers for the series discussed here, such as *God’s School*, *Helluva Boss*, and *Hazbin Hotel*.

I will undoubtedly write more about indie animation, but I wanted to compile together some of the stuff I’ve written on *Pop Culture Maniacs* over the years, from [August 2021](#) to [January 2022](#), [February 2022](#) to [July 2022](#), and a final one [in June 2023](#).

I did some spell-check and other revisions to ensure this text made sense, and to correct any errors that I made in the original text, which comes to over 14,000 words! Otherwise, the text is almost the same. Happy Reading!

- Burkely

Chapter One: The Indie Animation Boom and Crowdfunded Animation



On August 21, Vivienne Medrano [happily promoted](#) the newest episode of *Helluva Boss*, calling it the “most ambitious” episode they had done so far, thanking the Spindlehorse Toons team, and adding, in part, “Indie animation has POWER! Enjoy our hardwork!” Another indie animated series, *EddsWorld*, [praised](#) the episode, which garnered [800,000 views](#) in a few hours, as a “serious accomplishment in indie animation.” Medrano is one of the most prominent in the indie animation space, heading the mature animate series, *Helluva Boss*, a spinoff from her hugely popular *Hazbin Hotel*, another mature animation. The latter is on route to become a series on A24. Medrano has produced other animations, like “[Bad Luck Jack](#)” as an animated adaption of [her webcomic, ZooPhobia](#). She is not alone. She is only one of the many animators, creators, and others in the indie animation space, which has blossomed in recent years.

In this article I’ll discuss that boom and the themes of such indie animated series, using those listed in the [Creator nation index](#) and on a Twitter list titled “[Indie animation](#),” which are often released on YouTube. However, in some cases, indie animation have been [posted on Vimeo](#) and even on [Newgrounds](#). Medrano herself has [expressed interest](#) in posting uncensored *Helluva Boss* episodes to Newgrounds but noted that YouTube “viewership is important for the show and it’s where it thrives,” which is likely what many creators of indie animations believe.

In April 2021, John Evershed, the head of High Concentrate and Mondo Media, [released a paper](#) on adult animation. In [the report](#) he mentioned *Hazbin Hotel* as an example of a series which originated on YouTube and got “picked up as a long-form TV series,” noting that this pilot was made completely by freelance animators and “largely financed by Medrano’s Patreon followers.” He said this is a rare exception, however, saying there are limited opportunities to make money “with scripted content on social video,” and not much space for animation which is expensive. He later said that animation is popular with those aged 18 to 34, which streaming platforms have tried to use to bring in more subscribers.

But what about independent animation? It is animation which can be defined as an animated series and feature films outside the animation industry in Hollywood. Some say that with today’s technology, the animation process is “[more affordable for artists](#)” and means that viewers [don’t need](#) to rely on television networks for series. However, others note that, realistically, indie animators [have few resources](#), financially, beyond what they earn, leading them to move toward crowdfunding. All in all, indie animated series provide an alternative to the usual animation model of pitching a show to a major studio, something that *Infinity Train* creator Owen Dennis [explained in detail](#). When it comes to pitching, for many years, animated pilots have been pitched to major networks and [rejected](#) for one reason or another.¹ Even those shows those pilots have been accepted, it can take a while for these companies to accept the series. For instance, [it took 15 years](#) before Disney accepted *Phineas and Ferb* and it aired on Disney platforms. Indie animations, on the other hand, have the ability to have freedoms that shows on network television and mainstream platforms don’t, with artists able to go “all out on their storytelling abilities,” as [argued by some](#).

¹ Examples of pilots for shows that were rejected include: [Constant Payne](#), [The Modifiers](#), [Diggs Tailwagger](#), [Lehold](#), [Carmen Got Expelled](#), [Jo Minkus](#), [Monsters Abroad](#), [Thom Cat](#), [Werebeast](#), [Magic Children Doing Things](#), [Dungeon Crawlers](#), [IRL Squad](#), [Camp W](#), and [Trick Moon](#). Pilots of [Adventure Bodies](#) (2012), [Vileville](#) (2013), [Audience!](#) (2014), [C Students](#) (2014) (as it was discontinued [in 2015](#) and he discontinued the channel [in 2018](#)), [Showside](#) (2015), [Urbance](#) (2016), [Obituary](#) (2016) (after this, all other stories [continued](#) in webcomic form), [Becky Prim](#) (2016), [Film Quest](#) (2016), [Rock and Riot](#) (2016) (student film based on webcomic of same name), [Bamboo Garden](#) (2017), [Salt Kidz](#) (2018), [Cliffside](#) (2018) (announced [in 2020](#) it will not be continued), [Starship Goldfish](#) (2018) (very slim chance), [Bird Town News](#) (2018), [SpaceWorld](#) (2019), and [Wings of Fire](#) (2020) (cancelled for unstated reasons) will likely not be turned into animated series. *Belle & Tina are Time Travelers* had a [pilot in 2016](#), but it may be coming back as hinted in [a video clip in April 2020](#). The same may be the case with *Impotents* as the pilot [premiered in 2016](#), but the official website [lists six episodes](#), although none are online. On the other hand, the company producing the series last posted tweets [in 2016](#) and the [Kickstarter ended](#) the same year. *Song of the Sky*, the pilot of which premiered in [2018](#), may be turning into an animated series, according to posts on Patreon.

Many indie animated series showcase diversity. This is in part because some Black animators are behind the series themselves. For instance, a 16-year-old self-taught Black male animator, Wisdom Nunn, produced *Bob's World*. Nunn even appeared with Rad Sechrist, the creator of *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts*, in [a session on Instagram](#).² Other than Nunn, Cartoon Connect and [Brandon Wright](#), two Black male animators, led various animated series, which premiered on YouTube, like *Bob's World*.

Cartoon Connect, also [known as Brandon Reed](#), helms three series centering on Black families and characters: *Little Ron Ron*, *Gotta Be Mo*, and *Lumen*. All three series have their episodes posted on his [YouTube channel](#), in specifically delineated playlists, and comprise a total of 76 episodes. As for *Lumen*, it is based on a webcomic of [the same name](#) and focuses on a Black woman named Lyric in an abusive relationship and with magical powers. At the same time, Cartoon Connect created a [fan animation series](#) of characters from *The Proud Family*, titled *Loyalty High*. Like Cartoon Connect, Wright heads three animated series: *Guardian Instance*, [Silver Lin](#), and [Diver](#), which have diverse characters at the center of their stories and comprise, collectively, a total of 11 episodes. A show that Cartoon Connect later promoted, [The Quickenings](#), has a pilot [with Black characters](#) at the center, and the upcoming series, [Ascendants](#), centers people of color in its story as well.



Ollie & Scoops (left) and EddsWorld (right)

For some indie animated series, LGBTQ characters are [integral to their stories](#).³ For example, *Helluva Boss* has four LGBTQ characters, as does the animated pilot it split off from,

² It is likely that Sechrist's "[How to School](#)," for those interested in animation, drawing, and the like, will undoubtedly help animators either pitch their own shows, or move into the indie animation space.

³ In *Helluva Boss*, Blitzo is pansexual, Moxxie is bisexual, Stolas is gay or bisexual, and Sallie May is a trans woman, while in *Hazbin Hotel*, Alastor is asexual, Angel Dust is gay, Charlie Magne is bisexual, and Vaggie is a lesbian. In *S.A.L.E.M.*, Salem is a non-binary and pansexual character, Oliver is gay, and Petra is asexual. In *Rain*, Rain Flaherty is a trans girl, Fara Bryer is bisexual, Maria Strongwell is lesbian, Rudy Strongwell is gay, Emily

Hazbin Hotel. Other series in development, like *S.A.L.E.M.: The Secret Archive of Legends, Enchantments, and Monsters* (often known as [S.A.L.E.M.](#)), [Rain: The Animated Series](#), [Dirt: The Series](#), and [The Descendants](#) are full of LGBTQ characters. Specifically, *S.A.L.E.M.* has a non-binary protagonist, *Rain*, adapted from a webcomic of [the same name](#) has a trans girl protagonist, *Dirt: The Series* has a lesbian protagonist, and *The Descendants* will have LGBTQ characters as it is about acceptance and love. An indie, adult murder mystery in production about lawyers, [Wild Card](#), has a bisexual protagonist and a non-binary character. [Sheepish](#) has a non-binary sheep as protagonist and [Romancing Roslyn Cherry](#) is about two “furries falling in love.” Both series are still in development. Then there’s *Howdy Cloudboy*, which is being produced by an animation studio, Faeduck Studios, which [bills itself](#) as creating engaging and fun “adult animated content that highlights and praises the Black LGBTQ+ community.”

These are only some of the series featuring LGBTQ characters that are currently in development. For instance, in the [October 2020 episode](#) of *Ollie & Scoops*, a female teacher goes on a date with her crush, another woman, *My Pride: The Series* has a lesbian protagonist, and a sapphic couple appears in the original *EddsWorld* series: [Kim and Katya](#), with Kim as bisexual, and Katya as a lesbian. *Indigo*, an animated series said to be a sci-fi and comedy with lots of LGBTQ characters, and a non-binary protagonist, stands out above the lot, although its future is in question as the show’s account was suspended and will later be deleted.⁴ The creator of *Ollie & Scoops*, Nico Colaleo, created a short-lived web series titled [Too Loud](#) which aired on which DreamWorks TV’s YouTube channel from 2017 to 2019, including a transgender female protagonist who is still in the closet. If *Indigo*, *Howdy Cloudboy*, *Wild Card*, *S.A.L.E.M.*, and

Caston is pansexual, Vincent Valverde is a trans man, and Jessica Li is a trans woman. In *Dirt: The Series*, Claire and Ally are a lesbian couple. In [September 2020](#), Medrano supported two male characters in the animated *ZooPhobia* short, “Bad Luck Jack,” being shipped together. Other examples include *Gadzooks and the Cryptoid Kids* (a series by two gay men with LGBTQ themes), [Astur’s Rebellion](#) ([said to have](#) various LGBTQ characters), [C Students](#) (a lesbian, Nicole, who has a crush on the new female student, Penny, jerks off to a woman’s body, and a male student, Drew, is gay), [Finding Alyx!](#) (it will feature a non-binary artist), [Rock and Riot](#) (a girl, Penny, tries to get another girl, Carla, to like her), [Roads to Rome](#) (a supporting character, Mira, has two annoying dads), [Cirque Du Monstro](#) (has [an asexual main character](#)), [Succubus Cop](#) (has an [asexual cop](#)), [Starmakers](#) (has a [bisexual character](#)), [Cabiria Intermezzo](#) (one character has a crush on the protagonist), and [Long Way From Del’Arte](#) (has [bi and gay](#) characters). There may be LGBTQ characters in the following upcoming series: [The Journey for Our Lives](#), [Warlocks of Wrath High](#), and [Tallyho!](#).

⁴ The *Indigo* pilot was proposed [in December 2019](#) by an animator named Moon. Reportedly, the show’s account was [suspended](#) (and soon to be deleted) in preparation for a possible [pitching of a short](#) from the series to Cartoon Cartoons, a program restarted in April 2021 by Cartoon Network. According to a [now-deleted tweet](#), the main account for the series was being suspended for reasons of personal safety and due to the animation pitching process. Before the account was suspended, the show was going to be open crowdfunding, with promotion of various series in stages of development.

many others mentioned above, premiere independently, on a platform such as YouTube, they will be part of the “boom in indie animated series/projects” [started originally](#) on the *Indigo* Twitter account, and it is [great to see](#).

For independent animations, due to their wide range of plots and characters, they are spread across the genres. However, fantasy is a common genre. For instance, [Satina](#) and [Far-Fetched](#), are horror or black comedies. Both are produced by those who previously worked on [Helluva Boss](#) or *Hazbin Hotel*. Likely, series in development like [Mayhem](#), [Dark Harvest](#), and [Aisle 99](#), will have similar themes.

These are not the only fantasies out there, however. For example, to note a few series, [Lumi and the Great Big Galaxy](#), [Phantom Hollow](#), and [Deranged](#) are sci-fi fantasies, while [Ghost Friends](#), [Monstrosity](#), and [Ronzilla](#) are monster fantasies. There are magical and enchanted fantasies, sometimes involving adventure. Some examples include [True Tail](#), [Nori and Zin](#), [CriTORA](#), [Gods' School](#), [The Figments](#), [Magic Time Wizards](#), and [Kooky The Keukegen](#). Another common genre is superhero fantasies. Examples of this are plentiful, but some show this the most, such as [Quack Man](#), [Good Guys for Hire](#), and [Fighting All Odds](#).

Others which don't fit into the genres previously mentioned include a fantasy-action about cartoons coming alive ([Loki IRL](#)), two fantasy series set in a dreamland ([DREAMophrenia](#) and [Dreamcatchers](#)), a comedy-adventure ([Pigbog's Kingdom](#)), a space adventure ([Orbit Buzz](#)), and a school drama created by deaf folks ([The Road of Friendship](#)) to name a few. Of these series, only *DREAMophrenia* and *Gods' School* are currently airing, while the others either have a pilot or have an episode, or episodes, in development.

There are adventure fantasies like [Nautiboys](#), [The West Patch](#), [Tales of Alethrion](#), and [Port by the Sea](#). While *Tales of Alethrion* has interconnecting anthologies, *Port by the Sea* is created and produced by Georden Whitman, the creator of *Nomad of Nowhere*. Apart from these is a detective fantasy ([Blossom Detective Holmes](#)), which tells a story of two detectives determined to solve a murder. It is not the only independent anime, as [The Kamanai](#) is an independent anime in development. Then there's a Western fantasy created by animators Tara Billinger and Zach Bellissimo, titled [Long Gone Gulch](#). Creators of the latter, currently only a pilot, said in a video posted [in June](#) that they want to keep going with the project, announcing the launching of Patreon while they pitch to major networks. There's a number of series, such as [The Heroes of Tomorrow](#), [Zoolaplex](#), [Subway Surfers](#), and [Mugshot & Pollen](#) are all either dramas,

sometimes mixed with a slice-of-life, in the case of the latter two. Of these series, only *Blossom Detective Holmes*, *Tales of Alethrion*, and *Subway Surfers* have more than one episode, while the others only have either a pilot or are in development for a first episode.



Alpha Betas' pilot

While there are many other series, either inconsistently airing, or in development, often with a rash of voice talent, complex, developed, and diverse stories, and characters, they are of varying quality.⁵ Each of these series is unique, like a pilot with vibes of a mature version of *Glitch Techs* (*Alpha Betas*), a number of shows in development, such as one focusing on wolves (*Wolves of Cecilia*), another in telling the story of a young girl moving to Japan to be a manga artist (*Demonic Crepes*), and a show [centered around three girls](#) which have [vibes](#) of *The Owl House* and *Infinity Train* (*Stars Align*). There are many other series currently airing, such as animal-focused fantasies and many other fantasies, all of which may have complex stories and characters.⁶ It is unlikely that this [kind of creativity](#), which is [not constrained](#) by budgets, shown

⁵ Other series with a pilot, and are in development, include: [Bunker City](#), [Bussin](#), [Painquin](#), and [Project Tideaway](#). Others which are still in development, and without a pilot, include: [Crescent Fire](#), [Stellapie](#), [Squabs](#), [Bloop and Friends](#), [Harri's World](#), [Monkey Wrench](#), [Band of Mythix](#), [The Alyssian](#), [Second Light](#), [Don't Touch the Props!](#), [Espionage Actors](#), [Dark Pages](#), [Stick-Ers](#), [Crash in the System](#), [Here We Are](#), [Quest Infinite](#), [Harvey Beaks](#) (fan reboot), [Foreign Contact](#), [Transformers Alliance](#) (fan animation), [Arbor Square](#), [The Crystal Eden](#), and [Aleph Stars](#). *Sunset Paradise*, on the other hand, is another example of an indie animated series which ended, is with the finale [in July 2021](#).

⁶ Animal-focused fantasies include [Tales of Dawn](#), [Therapy Dog](#), [Bloody Bunny](#), [Fairy Foxes](#), [Apples & Dogs](#), [The Marvelous Adventures of Danny DeComp](#), and [All the Lone Ones](#). Other fantasies include [Maine Events](#), [Project Infinity](#), [Namo](#), [Renegades](#), [The Macron Show](#), [Ghosts on the Haunt](#), and [Dyes of the Soul](#).

in these series in development, would be allowed on more mainstream platforms. In the end, indie animations, no matter what form they come in, offer an alternative to the existing animations produced and released by the major studios, even if getting to release such animations can be daunting for creators.

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Chapter Two: The Indie Animation Boom Continues in 2022



In [August of 2021](#), I wrote about the boom in indie animation, consisting of almost exclusively crowdfunded animations. [Earlier this month](#), I expanded on that and wrote about various indie animations, specifically noting *Hazbin Hotel* and *Wild Card* which are in development. As storyboarder Amber Avara [put it on January 7](#), “2022 is the year of sick indie animation, let’s make it happen!” Various creators are making it happen. Due to the number of indie animated series being produced, it is nearly impossible to mention all of them. Despite that limitation, this article will highlight over ninety indie animated series, giving you a snapshot into the existing boom of indie animation at the present time, with notice to those currently airing.

On January 27, the fourth episode of *Gods’ School*, a French [indie animation](#) about Olympian gods and Greek mythology, will [air on YouTube](#). The series is created by one animator, Gaylord Cuvillier Philippe Libessart, [on his own](#)! In 2018, the series received support from the French National Center for Cinema and Animation, which gave Libessart the “opportunity to start the production and [make the pilot episode](#).” The first episode aired in January 2019, telling the story of Eris, a goddess [trying to find her place](#) among gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus. *Gods’ School* has been described as having animation [as “gorgeous as classic Disney,”](#) and it is adorable, really cool, an addicting and amazing cartoon

that should be [more well-known](#), and [praised](#) for its talented voice cast. Some have drawn fan art of the show's characters. As of the writing of this post, three episodes of the series have aired.

Other indie animated series currently airing include Wisdom Nunn's [Bob's World](#), Vivienne Medrano's [Helluva Boss](#), and Nico Colaleo's series, [Ollie & Scoops](#). *Helluva Boss* also includes several LGBTQ characters: Blitzo is pansexual, Moxxie is bisexual, Stolas is gay or bisexual, and Sallie May is a trans woman. In [the latter series](#), there was an episode in October 2020 centered around a teacher, Binnie, admitting she liked a fellow teacher, Wendy. Just as prominent is *Eddsworld*, a long-running animated series which began in December 2004. It continues to rack up [millions of views](#) on its YouTube channel, even with its *Eddsworld Beyond* season, which began in 2021 with Matt Hargreaves as a showrunner.

Additional currently airing series include the spy mystery series [SCP Origins](#), where incompetent spies try and take down villains, an adult animated comedy named [Nora and Zin](#), and an ongoing series named *The West Patch* which [describes itself](#) as "a dark look at the side effects of consequence-free children's programming." For the latter series, at present, there have been two episodes [so far](#). There are spinoffs also like [Space Triage](#) and [The Following Call](#). Also currently out for viewing are the Instagram clip show [Ronzilla](#), an original animated web series in which all the characters are dolls with the name of [Project Infinity](#), and a murder mystery series named [The Marvelous Adventures of Danny DeComp](#). Most of these series air on YouTube. This again makes clear the preference of the video sharing platform as a place to share series, making it even more popular than somewhere like Newgrounds.



Official art of Umi, Port, and Jolly Roger in Port by the Sea

In January of this year, non-binary Argentine artist, Moon, creator of the sci-fi series in development, *Indigo*, [asked](#) indie series creators to promote themselves. Many people responded. Georden Whitman [shared](#) news about his animated pilot in development, *Port by the Sea*, which focuses on two kids (Umi and Port) sailing the seas to “find pieces of their broken moon, before an ancient deity swallows the world in ocean.” Matt Acuña [shared](#) information about *The Garden Age*, a series in development focused [on “cute bugs](#) on their journey to stop a lawnmower from destroying their world.” Andre Grandpierre noted that [he is developing](#) *Long Way from DelArte*, an animated series about friends traveling around the world, in hopes of “achieving their artistic dreams.” Some said that they were developing hand-drawn animated films or animated series, all in distinct stages of development.⁷ Of these creators, some had some

⁷ Of note are animated series in development like [Re: Quest](#), [The Alyssian](#), [Don’t Touch the Props](#), [Bloop and Friends](#), [Gadzooks and the Cryptoid Kids](#), [Project: Tideaway](#), [Please Stay Tuned](#), [Finding Alyx](#), [Bleating Heart](#), [Marabelli: A Scoundrel’s Tale!](#), [Accidental Gehenna!](#), [Hockey, Love, and Guts](#), [The Crystal Eden](#), [Dragon Falls](#), [The Incredible Adventures of Detective Cat](#), [Blackwater Creek](#), [Defender Squad](#), [Framed](#), [Violet](#), [Revamped](#), [Destination Unknown](#) (to be re-imagined), [Broken Hearts Club](#), [Alfred the Alien](#), [Zeyka](#), [The Cosmos in Your Eyes](#), [Captain Zero](#), [The Fantastic Warriors](#) (tentative title), [Sorein](#) (working title), [Royal Pain](#), [Atomic Horseman](#), [Swift Spark and the Defense Five](#), [Space Landers](#), [Crescent Fire](#), [Dark Pages](#), [Crash in the System](#), [The Crystal Eden](#), and [Aleph Stars](#). Additionally, *Final Frontier*, a sci-fi/dark satire webtoon may be turned [into animation](#) if there is enough support. While I would include *Fruition of the Damned*, the creator of that series, [JrRMack](#), strongly supports NFTs, a morally corrupt cryptocurrency scheme which is harmful to the environment and the livelihood of artists. So, I cannot, in good conscience, support him or his series. The same applies to *Roads to Rome*, which is [also funded by an NFT](#). Compare this to Whitman, who has [said publicly](#) that “NFTs are garbage as is, and you wont

prominence in the animation industry. For instance, Whitman is the creator of *Nomad of Nowhere* and Acuña is the Production Coordinator for *Bob's Burgers*.

There is more “indie animated goodness,” as Whitman termed it. This includes series in development with a focus on magic and adventures like [Warlocks of Wrath High](#), [Century Park](#), [True Tail](#), [Stars Align](#), [Wimp Witch](#), and [Evelynne Doom](#). There are many other animated series in development.⁸ One example is a series about a non-binary sheep who is making their way through high school titled [Sheepish](#). Another is a cop buddy show between an ace cop and a succubus entitled [Succubus Cop](#). Two others, [Band of Mythix](#) and [Stellapie](#) are action series, with the former a musical series as well.

In addition, [Mugshot & Pollen](#) is about two best friends hanging out, [Starmakers](#), an action/adventure series, is about a [bisexual](#) girl named Astra who joins a guild and teams up with people to fight monsters after escaping those who want her as a “source of power.” There is a sci-fi, comedy, and horror series with the title [The Heroes of Tomorrow](#) and a series about wolves called [Wolves of Cecila](#). It is one of the many wolf-related series out there, with those in development including [Demon Soul](#), the concluded series *All Lone Ones*, and [The Shadow Marked](#). An animated “homage to 8-bit [retro gaming](#)” named [Bit Wars](#) and a sci-fi series which may be released in June titled [Monkey Wrench](#) are just two more examples of potential upcoming indie animated series.

The creators of *The Descendants* said they would pitch their show this year. The series *Lumi and the Great Big Galaxy* had a fundraiser while the show [was in pre-production](#). Amber Avara, mentioned at the beginning of this article, continued working on an indie anime named

find my work involved in them,” as did the [official account of Wild Card](#) and [the account](#) of Faeduck Studios, which is producing *Howdy Cloudboy*.

⁸ *Century Park* is [said](#) to include Indigenous characters. Christopher Wade [noted](#) his film, in development, *The Will of Monsters*. Jenn [noted](#) their indie animation studio, Sunflower Club, and their animatic pilot for *The Figments*. It is not known the progress of *Dark Harvest*, with [the official account](#) saying that the episode is 45% done, and the show's creator calls himself an “[expert procrastinator](#).” The same can be said about *Aisle99* which has [an inactive](#) YouTube channel, but [semi-active Twitter](#), or [CriTORA](#). The social media accounts for animated series like [Harri's World](#), [Dirt: The Series](#), [Romancing Roslyn Cherry](#), [Phantom Hollow](#), [Deranged](#), [Zoolaplex](#), [Cabiria Intermezzo](#), [Here We Are](#), and [Demoniac Crepes](#) (created by Bubblegum Cartoons, and has a pilot in 2019) are inactive. While there is [a listing](#) of those working on the show *Mayhem* by Magpie V. Raven's website, she is [stepping back](#) to pursue her own projects, like the *Kina's Adventure* series while Sir Mayhem / Paul may continue the series after the animated film *Mayhem Zombie Oblivion* premieres. Raven is also an artist for *Lackadaisy*, *Mystery Skulls*, *Ollie & Scoops*, and more. The pilot episode of *Stars Align* [has been written](#), and it will “premiere when completed on YouTube,” with characters redrawn, people [cast](#) for roles, in a series with *The Owl House* and *Infinity Train* [vibes](#). It is possible that Sara Eissa's *Astur's Rebellion* might be pitched somewhere again, as that animation is [now under](#) a company named Toon Cave, according to the updated website.

Nocturne, sharing information about the character, images of [color tests](#), and [character sheets](#) with her followers. *Alpha Betas* is going ahead, according to [its Twitter](#) and [listings](#) on its YouTube page. It appears that [Long Gone Gulch](#), by Tara Billinger and Zach Bellissimo, is also going onto the next stage of its development, either by submitting the pilot, or becoming an indie animated series beyond the pilot. It's hard to know where *Long Gone Gulch* goes from here, whether it will stay on YouTube or end up on a major network.



Screenshot from opening of Wild Card

The indie, adult murder mystery series about lawyers set in a Boston where “[elite legal universities rule the legal system](#),” titled *Wild Card*, keeps moving forward. A pilot episode is [in development](#) and there was even a webcomic created on Line Webtoon to generate interest in the series and [tell some stories](#) using certain characters. The series’ official Twitter account, and additional social media accounts associated with the series, shared news, test animations, and music in the series. The show features LGBTQ characters like the show’s [bisexual protagonist](#), Jack, based on show creator Alex Bahrawy (who is [also bisexual](#)), and a [non-binary character](#). Some called the series, which has been in the works [since 2016](#), “[one of the coolest](#) indie productions,” and “[really cool](#).”

Since my last post, [Cartoon Connect](#)’s series *Little Ron Ron*, *Gotta Be Mo*, *Lumen*, or *Loyalty High* have not been continued. He appears to be working on a new animated series called *Kenny Quick*, [asking for voice actor auditions](#) in November 2021. The same is the case for Brandon Wright – it looks like his animated series [Silver Lin](#) is unlikely to continue. The same

appears to be the case for [Guardian Instance](#). Despite this, *Diver* appears to be on track, as a video this month [noted](#) that a new episode was being developed. *The Quickenings*, with a pilot airing [in July 2020](#), and *Ascendants*, a series which appeared to be in development, are dead in the water.⁹ While those shows may be ending, unless something miraculous happens, [Howdy Cloudboy](#), a Western genre series with a main cast who are “all black lgbtq+ folks,” is being developed by a Black and Queer led [studio](#) named Faeduck Studios.

The *Far-Fetched Show*, created by Ashley Nichols and Dave Capdevielle, who both previously worked on *Hazbin Hotel*, has gone ahead. The official account put out a call for more animators and clean-up artists [at the beginning of this year](#). *Far-Fetched* is a horror comedy about Rue Cervello (voiced by Nola Klop), a young woman who loses her chaotic canine, Kira (voiced by Jazmine Luevanos), and joins a bunch of musical misfits (Quinn, Griff, Piper, and Warren) who are part of the [band](#) Sesamoid. They work together to fight and survive in a place where science [clashes with the supernatural](#). There are two villains: Drain (voiced by Michael Zekas) and Blair (voiced by Lauren Landa).

At one point last year, there was a post of the show’s official Twitter, showing the characters [holding LGBTQ flags](#). Rue holds a sweater saying she is questioning, Quinn Hickley (voiced by J. Michael Tatum) holds the demisexual panromantic flag, Griff (voiced by Jacob Takanashi) holds an asexual flag, and Piper Stubbs (voiced by Dani Chambers) holds a lesbian flag, while Kira and Warren Webber (voiced by Jonah Scott) are allies. This was clarified [by Nichols](#). The show’s [current route](#) is to fully fund the pilot themselves, then launch a larger crowdfunding campaign and merchandising to give the series “longer episodes” and make additional “bonus content.”[

Presumably, shows like *Satina*, a dark comedy, will include LGBTQ characters. Hopefully, *Satina* will premiere this year. Like *Satina*, which continues to be in development if anything can be gleaned by creator [Hannah Daigle’s YouTube channel](#), once the episodes of

⁹ It is not unique in this. The series *Ghost Friends* has [ceased production](#), *Monstracity* seems like it has ended, as does *Maine Events*, *All the Lone Ones*, *Magic Time Wizards*, *Kooky The Keukegen*, *Tales of Dawn*, *Namo*, *Renegades*, *The Macron Show*, *Ghosts on the Haunt*, *Quack Man*, *Good Guys for Hire* (possibly), *Therapy Dog*, *Bloody Bunny*, *Dyes of the Soul*, *The Journey For Our Lives*, *Espionage Actors*, *Second Light*, *Squabs*, *Bunker City*, *Bussin’*, *Painquin*, *Fairy Foxes* (reportedly it will be continued), *Apples & Dogs*, *Loki IRL*, *Tales of Alethron*, *Transformers Alliance* (fan animation), *Arbor Square*, *Quest Infinite*, *Harvey Beaks* (fan reboot), *Foreign Contact*, *Subway Surfers*, and *Bunny and Caramel*. Additionally, there haven’t any new episodes of *DREAMophrenia* for a while, *Dreamcatchers* seems a far way off, as does *Pigbog’s Kingdom*, *Stick-Ers*, and *Orbit Buzz*. *Nautiboyz* seems like a one-time thing.

Far-Fetched are finished, they will be [on YouTube](#). Comics of the show's characters will likely be released.



Four characters from of LimeLight (Ashira, Carter, Cheryl, and Alex)

A show I learned about recently [is LimeLight](#). It started development [in January 2021](#) and is created by a small production team that is part of the Uphoria Animation Studio. It is about a young Black woman named Ashira GoldenFire (voiced by Jazzy Greene) in New Orleans who tries to make it in the music industry. She is helped by her friend Cheryl Stone (voiced by Zoie E. Absher). Both go through “hardships and the evolution of music” as they try to achieve their dreams. But her path becomes harder after she brings Carter Sillver (voiced by Jack Kelly Savage), a Voodoo man, into her life. It is, as the show's official website [describes it](#), a series with a “twisted love story and adventure.”

The series, which has crowdfunding campaigns on [Indiegogo](#) and [Patreon](#), already has a talented [cast](#). Apart from those already mentioned, [the cast](#) is diverse, with various Black and Brown actors. Most of those on the crew appear to be first-time actors as the [page on IMDB](#) for the show indicates. The series is created by Hannah I. Johnson, who serves as writer, director, and producer.

Apart from Johnson, the [show's team](#) consists of over 30 people, headed by a voice director, production manager, animation director, and editor. It includes various character and creature designers, background artists, writers, storyboarders, animators, and musicians. Johnson, known as MoralSky on Twitter, is [the head writer](#) on *Samson*, [described](#) as a “modern take on Robin Hood,” a producer of Robert J. Preston's *Fighting All Odds*, an indie coming-of-age animated series about a deaf girl named Jackie, and founder of the Uphoria Animation Studio.

Johnson has said, [some time ago](#), that she'd like the pilot of *LimeLight* to be released in Winter of this year or early 2023.

LimeLight is not the only indie animated series about music. *Far-Fetched*, which was discussed earlier, focuses on a band, as does [Battle of the Bands](#), a 2d mature [animated series](#) created by Allissoon Lockhart, a producer of Studio Meala, supervisor at Netflix, manager of the Qbomb band, and a drummer, with Parker Simmons as the co-showrunner. As it turns out, the lead character designer of *Battle of the Bands*, Max Monroy, [is also](#) the lead character designer on *Far-Fetched*!



Title and characters from Battle of the Bands

Simmons was previously the creator and executive producer of *Mao Mao: Heroes of Pure Heart*. [The show](#), *Battle of the Bands*, is an [adult action fantasy](#). It has Arin Hanson, Game Grumps, Hunter Peterson, Matthew Di Panni, and Hunter Burgan as producers. It looks like it will come out some time this year. Hanson, Di Panni, Erica Mendez, Sarah Natochenny, Erika Ishii, and Imari are voice actors who are part of a band [called Heat Seekers](#). Already character sheets and bios about the show's characters have been posted, it has been [said](#) there will be [a lot](#) of LGBTQ characters, and amazing art about the show has been shared as well, along with the show's [music score](#). Lockhart has been very active in answering questions and talking about the show on Tik Tok, Twitter, Twitch, Instagram, and elsewhere, including [noting the female musicians](#) among the show characters, since the show was [created in 2017](#).

LimeLight, *Battle of the Bands*, and *Band of Mythix* make me think about a *Metal Family*, a Russian indie animated series focusing on a heavy metal-loving family, [I recently reviewed](#). Similar to *Metal Family*, [Battle of the Bands](#), *Band of Mythix*, and [LimeLight](#) will be released in some form on YouTube. Unlike *Metal Family*, the aforementioned series are primarily English language series. Although the *Metal Family* is originally in the Russian language, it has a different voice cast for English dubbed episodes.

On an unrelated note, it's exciting to see that the show, *Road to Friendship*, [has changed](#) into a show named *Corrupted Memories*. That series is created by Jocelyn Saravia, a deaf Latinx storyboard artist, and they are collaborating with their friends on the show. [This new show](#) is about a mysterious stolen experimental drug which causes "tension between the group of college students."

Not every indie animation can survive the process of development. Some series are abandoned or ended for one reason or another. One recent example of this is [Rain: The Animated Series](#), based on the [soon-to-end](#) webcomic of the same name by Jocelyn Samara DiDomenick which has a trans protagonist named Rain Flaherty, a bisexual aunt of Rain named Fara, a gay man named Aiken Flaherty, a lesbian named Maria Strongwell, a pansexual girl named Emily Caston, and a trans woman named Jessica Li, along with [additional characters](#). The official YouTube channel described it as a "story for boys, girls, and everyone in between." In September 2021, it was abruptly cancelled before the series premiere.¹⁰ However, the video of the cancellation was later [updated](#) to say that while the attempt to "adapt the full comic" has ended since "many of the old cast and crew have moved on," videos will presumably come in the future. This was further confirmed by a comment saying that while the comic is no longer being animated, there [will be "more"](#) shorts and videos." This means that the [passion project](#) can continue, but not as a full-fledged animated series. Even so, such an animated series is still possible. [One comment](#) said it is only "canceled for now." Another said that the original push for an animated series [fell apart](#).¹¹

¹⁰ The author of the webcomic based on the series, Jocelyn Samara DiDomenick, [said](#) that there was a number of reasons for the series ending, but said that "the very short answer... is that things just kinda weren't working out" and called it "a bummer," but is trying to look at the positive here.

¹¹ *Cirque Du Monstro* (CDM) is an additional series which fell apart, but for different reasons than *Rain*. The CDM Twitter account was deleted. The YouTube channel is empty. The creator, Krisis, seems to have scammed those who wanted to work with them, and sexually assaulted (and harassed) people, according to animators and storyboards. For information on the latter, see Céline Heijnen's thread beginning [here](#), Bakakoujin's [tweet](#) (and [tweet thread](#)), Antonia Pinnola's [Facebook post](#), and [other tweets](#). Even a month before the tweets in December

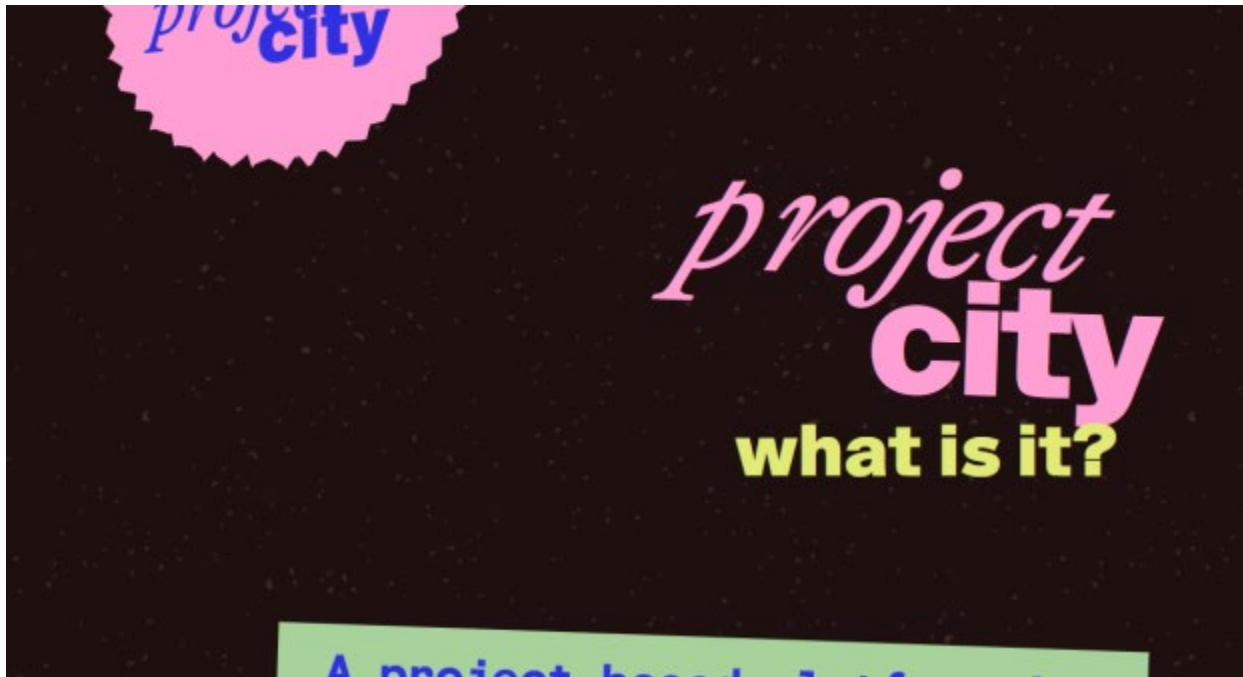
There are additional series I could talk about, like [Rogue Metro](#), a 2D animated “[post-cyberpunk science fantasy series](#) with medieval inspirations,” and the *S.A.L.E.M.: The Secret Archive of Legends, Enchantments, and Monsters* series which has a non-binary protagonist named Salem, along with Oliver who is gay, and Petra who is asexual. Its release date is unknown. The show’s official Twitter account has been silent since April of last year. In exciting news, however, this upcoming April, the series *Interstellar Ranger Commence* will be released on the [official YouTube channel](#) of Browntable, the production company for the series. This independent anime show will release episodes monthly, and is already set for [a season 2](#)!

In the end, I am optimistic that the boom in indie animated series will continue this year and for years to come, bringing joy to creators, artists, voice actors, and viewers alike.

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2021, various animators promoted the show. According to a private tweet of Krisis’s account, M0nsterParent, on December 8, 2021, the “CDM crew has been officially disbanded” and the animation is no longer being made. This is unfortunate because I felt that the project had some promise. Animators like Shou Tuzi (creating *Tallyho!*) [stepped away](#) from any affiliation with the show or the company producing it, 3M Productions, as did voice actor [Mark Allen Jr.](#)

Chapter 3: The Promise of Rad Sechrist's "Project City"



In November 2021, Rad Sechrist, creator of the well-regarded series, *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts*, [announced the creation](#) of a platform known as Project City. Writer, comedian, and musician Ethan Becker, director and storyboarder [Chase Conley](#), and character designer, storyboarder, and illustrator [Coran Kizer Stone](#), joined on as co-creators of this platform.

Project City was [formerly named](#) the [Rad How to School](#), when it was only an animation school. Sechrist recently [described](#) the platform as “like several small creator owned studios banding together” to tell stories they wanted. In this article, I’ll examine Project City and projects on the platform. I’ll also discuss the project’s impact on the animation industry and indie animation space.

The [official website of Project City](#) describes it as a “project based platform for learning how to create animation.” It proposes a way for artists to fund their own projects by “splitting up the Intellectual Property into Fractional shares” that anyone can buy. This will allow fans to “fund the projects that they want to see happen and artists get to create their vision.” Future profits go to the IP holder. They are then “divided amongst investors and creators, according to their ownership percentages,” in a process known as fractional intellectual property or F-IP for short.

The site says it is trying to seek stories from creators providing “diverse perspectives that explore controversial subject matter” that larger studios wouldn’t touch, while trying to “teach students the ins and outs of animation...[and] allowing them to invest in animated projects.”

The website’s FAQ says that Project City lets people “learn how to make animation” by working on their own projects and offering classes about the “different stages of the production process.”¹² The same FAQ states that there is a Discord, notes that people can access classes they paid for until their account is inactive, and answers specific questions about projects and teachers. All in all, this platform, which reportedly [has a small staff](#), shows promise beyond anything in the usual studio system.

Project City’s section for [animation classes](#) has courses taught by top professionals in the animation industry. [These classes](#) focus on voice acting, animation programs, storyboarding, artwork fundamentals, pitching a series, and concept art. Others talk about character design, life drawing, film making, writing for animation, and fundamentals of animation storyboarding.

One of the more interesting sections is [about investing in your favorite projects](#). There are four projects ready to be funded as soon as the F-IP process begins. All four have begun pre-production: *Wonna the Wanderer*, *Robot Hunter: Rossum*, *Delinquents*, and *The Brave War*.



Conley, Sechrist, Becker, and Stone, with Prynoski on the screen in the background, in a January 28 video talking about their projects

¹² There is also an extensive [terms of service agreement](#), [privacy policy](#), [feed](#) and [search](#) sections.

The first of these series is [by Coran Kizer Stone](#). Its story is simple: a young girl named Wonna wanders into a forest, meeting an old man who sends her on “the most dangerous missions to meet and destroy the most powerful beings” in this world. Currently, it has a script, storyboards, an animatic, and visual development.

The second series is [by Chase Conley](#). In this series, artificial humans known as Primus Proxies have taken mankind prisoner. When a robot champion, Robot Hunter Rossum, appears to kill off the robot oppressors, the real champion, the real Rossum, watches, deciding whether it will aid or stop the impostor.

The third series is [by Ethan Becker](#). It is about “kindness and having fun” with a series of short stories. It is set in the real world rather than a fantasy one. There are characters, such as Pat and Titi, who struggle over whether to kill people, Bo, who has a crush on Zoey, best friends Zoey and Su, and a boy named Max who misses his family.

The final series, [The Brave War](#), is a unique one because Sechrist is one of the co-creators, with writer and director Andra Gunter and [Daniel Rojas](#). This animated film focuses on a group of young graffiti artists “from Watts make a punk song that goes viral.” Before they fulfill their wishes, a “kaiju apocalypse happens, destroying the world and their plans.”

In keeping with [Sechrist’s desire](#) for more young adult animation, this is a young adult “2d animated movie with all original music,” featuring Nya Durango, a painter and clothing designer who is 16 years old, an avid drawer C.J., also known as Caleb James, who is 12, and wants to prove himself to Nya and her friends. There’s a crew leader known for his incomplete ideas, Knowledge Crosswell, and his little sibling, Essence, who has a “quiet dry sense of humor.” The series has already been promoted [on the Kipo subreddit](#), where it is described as the “next project after *Kipo*.”¹³ Andra and Rojas previously both worked on *Kipo*. Specifically, Andra wrote some songs for *Kipo*, while Rojas [composed music](#) for the series.

On the *Kipo* subreddit, Sechrist said that music for *The Brave War* will be composed by Rojas. He described it as separate from *Kipo* and stated that *The Brave War* may turn into a

¹³ In one of the comments, Sechrist revealed that “Netflix told me to never pitch them anything like that ever again” and that’s why they “went independent.” That is unfortunate to hear about *Kipo*, but not surprising. He also [noted in September 2021](#) that he wrote a movie about Wolf, but Netflix “made them remove any stories from Benson Wolf or Jamack from seasons 2 and 3.” So, that sadly will probably not happen. He has been relatively active on the *Kipo* subreddit. Earlier, he [confirmed](#) Asher as a non-binary character and noted Asher was non-binary because [some on the crew](#) were non-binary. Sechrist [also said](#) they had 30 episodes from Netflix “from the very beginning” and wouldn’t let them do any after that saying that is “sort of the way Netflix wanted to operate.”

bigger series in the future. He argued that *The Brave War*, in terms of its content, is “somewhere between *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Walking Dead*, and *Attack on Titan*. Sechrist noted that one of the film’s characters, Essence, is non-binary. He further explained that in the film, creatures/monsters are affected by people’s energy, whether they are good or bad. He also argued that the film will have the highest quality animation possible. The show was promoted [on other subreddits](#) as well. Sechrist is also working with Gunter [on Kin](#), an animated music series about a demon girl named Kin who falls in love with an angel, and after the angel’s death, goes on a “revenge mission to kill God.”

The platform also has several other projects in different stages of completion. This includes stories about miners ([Amythias](#)), anime battles ([Sideman vs. Beta Squad](#)), a girl who tries to survive in a dangerous, dark cave ([Nina](#)), a student who has to face off against a robotic food service who tries to put local food trucks “out of business” ([Soul Food](#)), two sisters with magical powers ([Hanh and Minh](#)), a young Chupacabra taking chances in an annual band battle ([Monstar](#)), and an inter-dimensional wrestling championship ([Battle Dimension](#)). There are others about houseless people ([Hobos](#)), a mythical shapeshifting monster ([Lagahoo Girl](#)), supernatural high school sophomores ([Revamped](#)), supernatural gangs ([Spirit Fist](#)), a teen girl who accidentally time travels ([Time Trip](#)), or a series taking place inside of a video game ([Digital Hijinks](#)).

There are various projects consisting of creators sharing fan art, fan comics, webzines, short films, graphic novels, or trying out their storyboarding and drawing. Some projects focus on topics such as masked wrestling ([Los Torneos](#)), a gangster trying to leave his brothers ([Old Dog](#)), superhuman spies ([Titan Effect](#)), a space fighter pilot and his team ([Ganymede](#)), and friends who beat up angels ([The Pact](#)).

Others share ideas for magic, mystery, thriller, horror, neo-noir, sci-fi fantasy, adventure, humor, action, sports, supernatural, detective, and slice-of-life animated series.¹⁴ The same site

¹⁴ See [Sugarwaltz](#), [Thomas Crane and the Mind Machine](#), [Last Knight](#), [Starbound](#), [Biopunks](#), [Laundry Monsters](#), [Knightlights](#), [Lumeon Lands](#), [Magicless](#), [Wandered Here](#), [The Chippy and Loopus Show](#), [Kix and Giggz](#), [Atlantica](#), [Tall Tales of Magic and Mages](#), [Mag-Tech Noire](#), [Soggy Bills](#), [Power Up!](#), [Immortal Age](#), [Galactic Homerun](#), [The Great Run](#), [Almost Hero](#), [The Culling](#), [Bhoodham](#), [The Space Stragglers](#), [Book of Worlds](#), [Unresolved](#), [Seer](#), [Project N.e.w.m.o.o.m.e.](#), [The Ball](#), [Cation Princess](#), [Weirdogs](#), [Seldom Manifest](#), [Westwoods](#), [Plot Armor Academy](#), [Black Liquid](#), [Deadboy](#), [Epic Temple Quest](#), [Ad Lunam](#), and [Juvenile Delinquents](#). There’s also a train simulated web series named [San Juan Branch Line](#), animated films [Jupiter and Europa](#), [Lyrics for the End of the World](#), and [Dinonauts](#), collection of short films named [Conquer](#), a game named [Yasuke: A Lost Descendant](#), a streaming channel on YouTube named [Blutoonzty](#), and a music video named [Daylight](#).

hosts various webcomics, including a sci-fi comic with nudity titled [For Those Who Wonder](#), an adventure story titled [Boundless!](#), and a comedic, fantasy action titled [Taverns and Tentacles](#).¹⁵ While there is a lot there, I wish the site was better organized with more subcategories. Before looking into Project City, I was only familiar with [The Figments](#), [The Garden Age](#), and [Indigo](#). The head writer and project manager of *The Figments*, [Jennifer Rust](#), who I have mentioned in past articles, is the creator of [The Journey for Our Lives](#), [Planet Magi](#), and [Little Wolf](#), all on Project City. *The Figments* is created by [Kip](#), creator of the webtoon *Welcome To Sleepy Hollow*. In an interesting aside, before it became an animated series, Kipo [was a webcomic](#) which ran for 32 issues on a website run by Sechrist. Some of the webcomics on Project City may follow the same path.

On January 7, Sechrist [said](#) they were going to do a “very small test run of FIP shares to fund just one shot of Brave War to start,” and asked if there are some cool anime-style animators and background artists he should know about. This led artists and animators to promote themselves in the comments.

On January 28, Ethan Becker posted a video on his channel entitled “[I quit my NETFLIX job for this](#).” In the video, Becker said that they are trying to produce shows that major studios are too afraid to touch, explained what F-IP is, and described a few projects they are working on.

This includes a show by Titmouse Chris Prynoski, who produced shows like *The Legend of Vox Machina*, *The Midnight Gospel*, *Metalocalypse*, and *Megas XLR*. He described his series in development, *Leafland*, which has no plot, no characters, just feelings, and experience getting high.

Becker talked about his show, *Delinquents*, with all the “good” characters killed off. Instead, it focuses on the bad kids who live in an abusive household. He said that he would be incorporating many of his personal experiences into the show. He hoped that the show would be something that a lot of kids could relate to.

Gunter, who is working on *The Brave War* with Sechrist and Rojas, talked about how the film deals with a sense of abandonment. Sechrist described the film as going “against the grain.” Gunter also argued that with animation there is more of a range to make things “real,” with the

¹⁵ Of note is the webzine, [Erika the Typewriter](#), the horror comic [Be Right With You](#), the steampunkish webcomic [World Post Evil](#), and a later-to-be graphic novel named [The Enchanteds](#), along with the graphic novels [Wildertale](#), [Departure](#), [Hearth in Space](#), and a manga series entitled [Project Rogon Zero](#).

film placing Black characters in “stressful situations.” He later noted that the show’s title comes from his name in German.

Conley, the creator of *Robot Hunter: Rossum*, said that none of the projects he had worked on for the last ten years truly represented him. He described how certain aspects of Saturday morning cartoons resonated with him, keeping him going, and giving him inspiration. Stone, creator of *Wonna the Wanderer*, described how his characters exist as “emotional beings” in a world. Instead of being heroes or villains, they would be characters who exist. Wonna, the series protagonist, must battle entities from an artificially created universe, all while she doesn’t realize she is in a simulated world.

Sechrist, Becker, Gunter, and Conley shared the names of actors or actresses they’d like to work with, if they could, and continued to pass around a mic literally attached to a butcher’s knife. It will be interesting to see all four of them (Becker, Gunter, Sechrist, and Conley) come together and talk about their projects every week.

Project City has the potential to expand [the indie animation space](#) beyond the scattered, often [crowdfunded series](#) on YouTube, some of which are in development and a few which are currently airing like [Ollie & Scoops](#) and [Helluva Boss](#). Whether the platform is pioneering or not, it allows for more independence for creators in the series, movies, music, or shows they create. It is also cool, with its fun and slick [design](#). More significantly, it [provides people with a platform](#) to fund and create [their own projects](#) outside of using crowdfunding sites like GoFundMe, Kickstarter, and Patreon, meaning that it could be a game changer of sorts.¹⁶ It is, as aspiring screenwriter Wade McGrath [described it](#), “a kickstarter for animation...that also functions as a platform for people to hire other creatives.”

From the chatter on Twitter and responses on YouTube, it seems to be a place that creatives, allowing any possible [intellectual property](#), including a *Craig of the Creek* [storyboarder](#) and it has the “[potential to collaborate](#)” with others, [allowing](#) “cool projects” to flourish. There are [over 3,000](#) members on the Discord for the platform. Hopefully, Project City will be a boon for indie animation and push the animation industry in a direction that favors creators.

¹⁶ This is different from the approach of Nico Colaleo who said in [a February 2021 podcast](#) that he hopes to make *Ollie & Scoops* bigger and bigger until the series can get studio funding, his ultimately goal, although he is content with keeping it independent, wanting to pitch it to studios in person.

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Chapter 4: An Alternative to the Studio System?: Indie Animation Forges Ahead



Screenshots from [the pilot](#) of *Nori and Zin* (left) and latest episode of *Gods' School* (right).

Indie animation is on fire as of late. This is clear from the hundreds of thousands of dollars given to *Final Space* creator Olan Rogers for his animated project, *Godspeed*, which [will document](#) the “entire process of developing, writing, boarding, animating, and even pitching” an animated series. Sara Eissa, the creator of *Astur's Rebellion*, an animated series Crunchyroll passed on (to their detriment), has been posting updates and news about a site/startup that she founded, named [Toon Cave](#).

Originally, it was a video-sharing platform for animated content, like the indie animation platform, [Fiyah](#). Toon Cave recently [changed](#) to a “marketplace for freelance animators to find work or collaborate with other animators” which Eissa called “[more viable](#)“. Some may be disappointed in this result, but it could be a boon for indie animators. It will likely be NFT-free, [since](#) Eissa rightly recognized recently that “many artists are against it for ethical reasons”.

Many creators, artists, and others responded positively to [my previous post](#) about indie animation. As such, this post will not only be an update on that post, but it will highlight new animations that I wasn't aware of at the time I wrote that post.

Patreon is buzzing with activity. The first episode of *Nori and Zin* is being animated by [sharpytown](#). Lopside Animation, which produced [Long Gone Gulch](#), is moving forward with rough animations and likely more episodes in the future. Zeurel says the pilot of his series, *Monkey Wrench*, is almost ready to be released. Those working on [Sheepish](#), a series with a non-

binary protagonist, are saving up money until they begin crowdfunding. They are continuing to work on the pilot.

Animator Rebecca Doodles [has said](#) she is going ahead with development of the now-3D animated cartoon, [Stellapie](#), and other projects. Also of note is *The East Patch*, a series created by the same people behind [The West Patch](#). It has retro animation, a nostalgic style, and amazing art. It continues to move forward.¹⁷



Production on future episodes of Heloise's [Dreamophrenia](#) animated series continues forward. [Gods' School](#), created by a French animator, Gaylord C. Libessart, an indie animated series based on Greek mythology, continues to barrel ahead. A recent short episode about Aphrodite loving Ares and Hephaestus, and unsure of which one to choose, was released on the show's official YouTube channel earlier this month. Unlike previous episodes, it is less than five minutes long. More animated shorts are in production, with one coming this fall.

Hannah Daigle, a [bisexual animator](#) who is creating *Satina*, is advancing with the project. She put out a call for additional animators [earlier this year](#). Faeduck Studios, which I have mentioned in previous posts, [a studio](#) creating BIPOC LGBTQ+ animated films and short, in

¹⁷ This paragraph used information from the Patreons [of sharpytown](#), [Lopside Animation](#), [Zeurel](#), [Sheepish Series](#), [Rebecca Doodles](#), and [the East Patch](#). *The West Patch* is being pitched in hopes of becoming a more full-fledged series in the future.

their words, decided to shelve *Howdy Cloudboy* as an animated pilot back in September. However, they decided to turn *Howdy Cloudboy* into a motion comic, meaning that it is continuing. Since September, pages of the comic have been released on the studio's Patreon.¹⁸

Otherwise, [Wild Card](#), a mature murder mystery series about lawyers, is advancing. It is created by a bisexual man named [Alex Bahrawy](#). There are continued releases of *Wild Card: Shuffled!* illustrated pages on the show's Patreon and Webtoon.¹⁹ According to the show's official Twitter account, the pilot's pre-production by Astrobun Studio [is done](#).

Similarly, animated series by Black animator Brandon Wright, [the creator](#) behind *Guardian Instance*, [Diver: The Animated Series](#), and *Silver Lin*, among [other animations](#) go forward. Vivienne Medrano, creator of indie smash hits *Hazbin Hotel* and *Helluva Boss*, noted progress on the second season of *Helluva Boss*, which is premiering [on July 31](#). These series share similarities with Genevieve Fleming's *House of Hell* [which is about](#) demons, and [a human girl](#), Oria, who "has to live with them in an abandoned house".

This is only scratching the surface of [this indie animation boom](#), if it can be called that. There are various currently airing indie animated series. Apart from the aforementioned *Helluva Boss* and *Hazbin Hotel*, the latter in development for a full-fledged animated series, there's *Ollie & Scoops*. The series, by [Nico Colaleo](#), a good friend of Medrano, just aired its ninth episode, "[Vinnie Video](#)".

In comments below the episode, Colaleo noted that episode 10 will pick up where this episode left off. More episodes are likely in production. The [series](#) is notable especially because it includes many well-known voiceover artists. This includes Kimmy Robertson, Eric Bauza, Mara Wilson, James Rolfe, Mike Stoklasa, and Daron Nefcy.

[Eddsworld](#), is currently airing. Matt Hargreaves is the current showrunner. [emojitown](#), a series by the emoji company and Wisdom Nunn's *Bob's World* are also airing. In the [latter case](#), two episodes of [the series](#) have aired on YouTube. The third episode is currently in production. Slowly airing this year is an independent anime series, *Interstellar Ranger Commence*.

¹⁸ This paragraph used information from Patreons of [Heloise&RS](#), [Gods' School](#), [Hannah Daigle](#), and [Faeduck Studios](#).

¹⁹ This paragraph used information from Patreons of [Wild Card](#), [Essieo](#), [Brandon Wright](#), and [Vivienne Medrano](#).

The first episode was released on the [official YouTube channel](#) of Browntable, the series production company, on [April 2nd](#). Although the episodes were [originally scheduled](#) to be released on a monthly basis, the second episode [was delayed](#) to sometime in July.

The same can be said about *Michael and James*, a series by Jon Lopez, who is also a lead animator for *Eddsworld*. The last episode aired [in February](#), and the series is currently on hiatus. This short web series sticks in my mind because [the first episode](#) is a musical song by Elsie Lovelock who voices a guitar-singing girl named Leslie Loveydovey declaring “This House is Mine” as she invades the house of Michael and James. Lovelock later voiced Charlie Magne in the pilot of *Hazbin Hotel*. She has [voiced many other characters](#) and records covers for her YouTube channel.



Not found

Hi [#PortfolioDay](#) ! 🦔

I'm an Argentinian storyboard artist/revisionist looking for (remote) studio work! I'm good with drama, comedy and acting.

I'm also the creator of future animated webseries

«INDIGO» 🧐 👁️ 💜

🌙 DM for Portfolio please! [#openforworkanimation](#)
[pic.twitter.com/GWlOlXj0E3](#)

— MOON 🌙 (@__MOONBINARY) [July 12, 2022](#)

A now-deleted tweet by Moon looking for work, and noting their indie animated series, Indigo, which may later turn into a comic.

There are other series currently in production that are just as exciting. Take, for example, *Indigo*, a sci-fi animated series [created](#) by a Latine non-binary storyboard artist [named Moon](#), who often draws *The Owl House* fan art. Max is a non-binary protagonist, who realizes that the

universe is ruled by two alien dictators, and goes on a journey to stop them. The pilot episode is [currently in production](#). Moon put out [a search](#) for 2D animators and background artists for the series. They [even created](#) a Discord server for indie animation! The series, according to the show creator, will include asexual characters, robots, and villains scarier than before.²⁰

Various indie animators responded to [a tweet](#) from Moon. There were some series I was familiar with, like the coming-of-age *Stars Align*, a cop series named *Succubus Cop*, and a space opera series *Lumi and the Great Big Galaxy*. In addition is a pilot by two gay married men (Félix M. and Floyd) filled with LGBTQ+ characters, [Gadzooks! & The Cryptoid Kids](#), and a New Orleans based series named *LimeLight*.

Also of note is the magical slice-of-life entitled *Mugshot and Pollen*, the artistic-themed *Long Way from Del'Arte*, a horror-action-romance pilot named *Nocturne*, a fully deaf produced animated show named *Corrupted Memories*, and an upcoming series named *Fighting All Odds*.

There were other series I was not aware of, such as a sci-fi action adventure named *Defenders of Alodia*, a horror sci-fi named *Crater Cove*, and *Creosote Raining!* [by Joshua](#). The latter recommended I mention an independent horror miniseries, *My Roof*. There are many more I could mention, like a 2D science-fantasy named *Among the Others* and the game-themed [Bit Wars](#).²¹

[Fighting All Odds](#) is more than an upcoming series. On January 28, the show's creator, Robert J. Preston, told me in a direct message that the show is a coming-of-age story about Jackie. While she is deaf and hard of hearing, her deafness isn't the subject of the show, as noted by Preston. Rather, the focus is on her hero's journey. At certain points, Jackie uses American Sign Language (ASL) to talk to specific people. There are two deaf consultants to make sure the series best represents a "group of people who deserve more representation."

The series has LGBTQ characters, like a non-binary character named Oli/Ironside, and those with disabilities. Preston emphasized these characters aren't written differently from any others. In his words, Jackie's struggles come from her choices as a hero and individual, but not because

²⁰ See tweets [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

²¹ There's two series adapted [from comics](#): the supernatural series *WeatherWitch*, and robot-themed *Space Cops*. Others with previously aired series, like [Lions Light](#) and [Sirenetta](#) also responded. Other examples are a surreal adult animation named [Tailocity](#), a sci-fi thriller named *Eidolons Vision*, a fantasy-adventure named [Bonorum](#), a [boxing fantasy](#) named *Punch Drunk Monkey* [by](#) Brad Braché, the superhero series [Aleph Stars](#), a cartoon [about](#) an overpowered superhero horse and "his sidekick Beaver fighting Evil" named *Atomic Horseman*, J.M. Collado's *Finding Alyx* about [a "child"](#) who learns...art of self expression through his alternative neighbors", and an original "medieval post-cyberpunk science fantasy series" named [Rogue Metro](#).

of her deafness. He added that the series may touch upon LGBTQ identities and disabilities of specific characters as part of the “exciting super hero action story”.

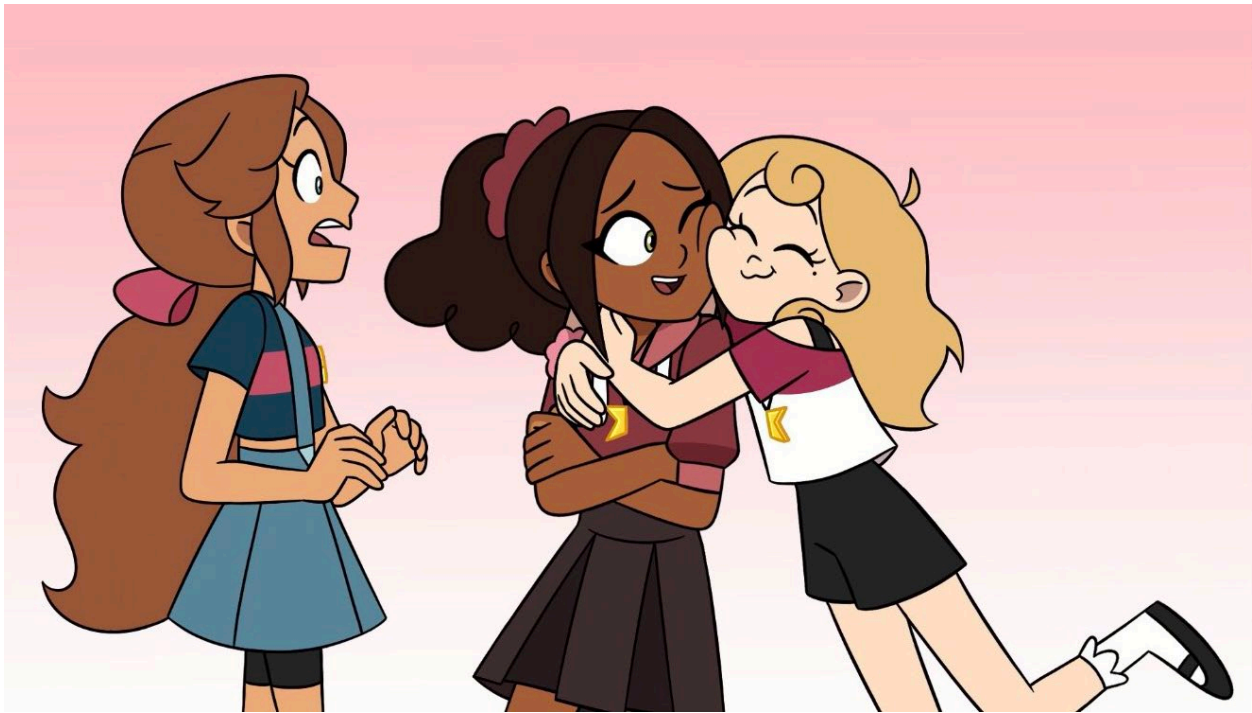
Corrupted Memories, an animated series by a deaf Latine storyboarder, Jocelyn Saravia, has some thematic similarities to *Fighting All Odds*. This series is [aiming to be](#) a “fully deaf produced animated show”, with a pilot coming out possibly in the next year or so. The series may have some themes reminiscent of *Inside Job*, by former writer for *Gravity Falls*, Shion Takeuchi, as it [centers on](#) a “mysterious stolen experimental drug” which causes tension between college students, who try and find answers and attempt to piece together what happened.

As the [show’s official website](#) says, they don’t want those investigating the incident to know everything. The series may also be influenced by series such as *Kim Possible*, as Saravia says they [were inspired](#) to go into animation because of the show, and *The Owl House*, since she is a big fan of the latter series. They are also the creator of a comic named *Mother Traces*.

This differs from Evan’s series, [Lumi and the Great Big Galaxy](#). The show’s [Kickstarter](#) further describes it as a sci-fi fantasy with humor and adventure, and a “mix of both episodic and linear storytelling.” The page also notes that this animated series [in development](#) is inspired by *Wonder Over Yonder* and *Steven Universe*, and says it has been in development since he was in middle school. The series is planned to be released in either late 2022 or early 2023, with the voice actors even outlined!

This series is as exciting as *LimeLight*. It is a series, according to [its Patreon](#), mainly set in New Orleans. The series focuses on Ashira GoldenFire who is trying to make her way in the music industry, but she becomes associated with “darker side of life” through Carter Sillver. She falls in love with him, but her future from then on is uncertain. It’s quite [an exciting hook](#) into the story.

The series had its [first livestream](#) with the show’s voice actors, creator MoralSky (Hannah I. Johnson), and many others, [streamed](#) on the show’s YouTube channel. These creators recognize what Jenn, co-creator of the Sunflower Club, [stated](#): “indie animation is not for the weak”.



Penelope LeBlanc lovingly hugs Dakota Rivers, while Elizabeth Montgomery looks on in a screenshot of [a short animated clip](#) by Stars Align creator, Thea

The Patreon for *Stars Align*, a slice-of-life fantasy [with LGBTQ+ representation](#) may open [on August 1](#), according to Thea, the show's creator. There was recently [a collaboration](#) with another upcoming musical series, *Sunnyside Magic High*. Thea noted that *Stars Align* takes [inspiration](#) by *The Owl House*. This isn't a surprise as she has drawn *The Owl House* and *Amphibia* fan art. Currently, writing for the pilot episode is done, while plotlines for season one [are being worked on](#).

In an interesting coincidence, there is an anime series with the same name directed by Kazuki Akane, and cut from 12 episodes [down from 24](#) at the last minute. That series shares something with Thea's *Stars Align*. There is LGBTQ representation as well. Yuta "Yu" reveals he is "binary trans, x-gender, or something else entirely" as one reviewer [pointed out](#). The series also has a focus on mental health too [like Thea's Stars Align](#). In response to a fan, Thea [noted](#) that she was aware of this similarity two years after she had created her characters, although it didn't have any effect on what she created.

On a related note, is Pia's *Mugshot and Pollen*, a [magical slice-of-life](#). I'm a big fan of older slice-of-life series like *Azumanga Daioh*, and *Dear Brother*, and newer series such as

Ascendance of a Bookworm, *Akebi's Sailor Uniform*, *Laid-Back Camp*, *Let's Make a Mug Too*, and *YuruYuri*. I also like stories with magic, so this series would be right up my alley, and anyone else who enjoys such a series.

On a different vein is storyboarder Amber Avara's *Nocturne*, filled with "vampires, retrofuturistic tech, nu-wave music". [She describes](#) the series as a cross between *Jem and the Holograms* and *Berserk*. It shares some similarities with Allissoon's *Battle of the Bands*. The latter is a 2d mature animated series [in development](#) about a world where musicians "[have elemental powers](#) based on the genre of music they play". It is a series which sounds like a real rocker, for sure.

Then there's *Mysteries of Kruger Mansion* which follows 14 young adults, ages 18 to 19, cast in a reality game show set in a haunted mansion. According to a direct message from [Deric Jackman](#), one of the show's co-creators (Adam Blubdi is another creator), this turns into a quest for "sinister truth" behind the mansion. It is, in his words, a "dark drama thriller" with blood, comedy, and a deep-cutting story.

The series, once finished, will air on the YouTube channel of [Blu Productions](#), the company producing the series. The series, in some ways, gives me the same vibe as the classic 1993 supernatural black comedy film, *Addams Family Values*. It also makes me think about the short-lived young adult animated series, *The Hollow*, which had reality game show elements.

On another note, is a sci-fi action-adventure cartoon named *Defenders Of Alodia*. It is created by [Naya](#), a 19-year-old Black animator and SCAD student. Art direction and character design are by [Vector Convoy](#). This [series](#), in development, has a Kickstarter in the process. It is [being produced](#) by an emerging animation company, Boldbird Studios.

A recent tweet from the show's official Twitter account [said](#) it has "Black girl magic" and stated that the series is "coming soon". It fundamentally differs from *Long Way From Del'Arte*. The latter focuses on artistic friends who [travel their world](#) of "art, magic and science to find ancient stones that have the power to grant wishes". All these projects come with a risk, even though many don't want to deal with studios anymore, as some [have noted](#).



Otherwise, Shannon Mowatt's 16-minute animatic of [Revamped](#), has been released in advance of the full animated pilot. It is an upcoming short queer film about four high school sophomores who deal with school life, vampires, and the supernatural world.

There's the [Lackadaisy film](#) about 1920s gangster cats, based on Tracy J. Butler's webcomic. Another series, [Outcasts](#), has cats as characters. Shou Tuzi's *Tallyho!* series continues [to develop](#). It is inspired by steampunk, fantastique, and other media. Tuzi's studio, Skull Hare Studio, is also [working](#) on *Arthur: The Timeless Knight*.

Daniel is continuing to pursue his action-adventure series, *Lumeon Lands*, which has [begun production](#). These series are important to highlight when Hollywood continues to end projects and sack animators. [Some](#) have put hope in indie animation, noting it has the promise to allow creators to [have "creative control"](#) unlike working under major studios.

While there are many indie animations I could mention.²² However, I'd like to focus on a few series in development. One of those is Sam Sawyer's *SALEM*, also known as *Salem* or

²² Take, for example, joolia's *The Legend of Pipi* [animated film](#), a channel [named GLITCH](#) creating animated shows, a short 3D animation film [Grandma My Love \(Mi Amor\)](#), a media brand named [The Dynamite Twins and Friends](#) with shorts, clips, and music, an animated series by Aran W of Fiyah entitled [Scratch](#), an animated series [by Corey](#) named *Newt* currently [on hiatus](#), an animated series entitled [Don't Touch the Props](#), the mature animated series [Boy Meets Underworld](#), an animated series named [Blood and Skinny Hedgehog](#), animated shorts featuring [Serenity Lockhart](#), and a series centered around teenagers with magical powers and must save the world entitled [Warlocks of Wrath High](#).

S.A.L.E.M.: The Secret Archive of Legends, Enchantments, and Monsters. In May, SpectroliteAAA, the lead storyboard artist said that she could talk about it soon, but [not yet](#). In January, Sawyer, when asked by a fan, [said the same thing](#).

The series has been fully funded. The now-fulfilled Kickstarter defines the series [as an animated story](#) about “a cryptid with a big heart and even bigger questions, on a quest to discover their true origins”.

Apart from having high-profile voice actors like Laura Bailey, Rob Paulsen, and Adam McArthur, [a tweet](#) from the show’s account confirmed Petra as asexual, Salem (who is also non-binary) as pansexual, and Oliver as gay. The series has Randy Abrams as executive producer. It is being animated with help from Surfer Jack Productions, a company [said to specialize](#) in “ingenious storytelling”. The company was founded by animation industry veterans Jeff “Swampy” Marsh, Lance LeCompte, and Bernie Petterson.

There are other series in development. This includes Georden Whitman’s pilot named [Port by the Sea](#) on two kids who are “sailing the seas to fix a now broken moon”, Matt Acuña’s fantastical adventure [The Garden Age](#), and the *Far-Fetched Show*, [an animated series](#) “about a rock band of misfits” by Ashley Nichols and Dave Capdevielle.

In addition, there’s a demon/vampire themed series in the process entitled [Bloodgore](#), the psychological horror dramedy named [Please Stay Tuned](#), the ghost-themed *Ghost Hunt*, a sci-fi themed *SpaceAges*, and many more. These are a small sampling of the indie animated series out there.²³ These persist despite the problem of distribution and funding to “make original stuff”, and possible iffiness of crowdsourcing, as writer Chris Hill [pointed out](#).

²³ Others include a slowly moving flash animated series, *True Tail*, C. Cameron’s *Wimp Witch*, Colin McCall’s adventure-comedy *Evelynne Doom*, and [hints](#) that Zak Wood will independently produce the action-musical *Band of Mythix*. There’s Crash Tako’s *Lovers in Crime*, which currently [has a pilot](#), Micaela Wainstein’s series in development, *The Crystal Eden*, an original anime [named The Kaminai](#), a sci-fi series named *Deranged!*, an animated series named *CRiTORA*, a slowly developing series named *Jade*, an animated web series entitled *Bleating Heart*, Glenn Draper’s [Space Landers](#), and *Marabelli: A Scoundrel’s Tale*, a series produced by [Adventure Noises](#) and created by [Benjamin Feldman](#), is moving into [full production](#).



Port by the Sea's pilot will likely come out sometime [later this year](#). The *Far-Fetched Show* is also moving ahead, [with comics](#) to go with the series like *Wild Card*. The Nichols' Patreon [notes](#) that a lyrics video for the series band, Sesemoid, is coming out later this year. This also noted they are still working on the pilot. Currently, there is [wonderful](#) fan art of the show's characters, [including](#) putting them in a *Steven Universe* setting, and much more.

The fact that *Port by the Sea* has over 1400 followers and *Far-Fetched Show* has over 67,600 followers, along with 406 Patreons of Nichols, proves what animator LanceArts [pointed out](#): that the indie animation scene is “exploding with greater popularity now more than ever.”

More episodes of *Alpha Betas* are [currently](#) in production, with recording for new episodes. Four episodes are set to [be released](#) in Fall/Winter 2022. Additionally, Lucha Vandross is [fundraising](#) for various indie animated series. This includes those inspired by 1980s Hong Kong films (*Project Icarus* and *Project Icarus X*) and a modern take on Robin Hood. The latter is about friends “robbing the rich and giving it to the poor” (*Samson*).²⁴ Animator 9Hammer is [actively releasing](#) series in Newgrounds, of all places. This includes series such as *Chaotic Heart* and *Solace*, with new episodes in production.

²⁴ He is trying to produce a hip-hop influenced 3D action game named [Supremacy](#), which looks cool.

Others, like Warlord-of-Noodles, have [ongoing series](#) as well, which is also posted on YouTube and has a [Patreon](#). Series like *Deep States*, [by Molly](#), are [on YouTube](#). There is the exciting 2d indie anime in development entitled *Broken Beat*, made by animators of prominent anime series, like Creative Theory. The series is about a protagonist, Sin, tasked with stopping the reign of the creator god, and challenged by an “endless conflict between humans and manifestors”. Sin masters his form along the way.

Newgrounds is a weird place. There’s a lot of terrible (and amateurish content) there, mixed with sexual content. It is more than what YouTube would permit, and includes pornographic material. Apart from the series on hiatus by 9Hammer, *Beyond the Fog*, there’s *The Looter*, and *Zack and Alex*. The latter, by Jayevin Abad, had its pilot [posted on YouTube](#) as well. Otherwise, there are various other series, films, and more, which have aired on the site.²⁵ Some shows I’ve noted before in this post, and elsewhere, like *Ollie and Scoops*, *Eddsworld*, *Tales of Alethrion*, and *Satina* all have pages on the site.

Apart from Newgrounds, are further series in development. This includes [The Art Of Murder](#), produced by an Australian indie 2D animation studio named Choc Chip. It is produced by Anokhi Somaia and directed by Nirali Somaia. Sonya Belousova and Giona Ostinelli are the series composers.

The Art of Murder is a murder mystery, musical, and pop culture parody where “sketchbook characters come to life” when the clock strikes midnight. It features voice actors like [Lizzie Freeman](#), who also voices a character in *Gods’ School*, [Lauren Lopez](#), who founded a popular online musical theatre company named Team Starkid. There’s also Joey Richter (part of the same theatre company), Joey Bizinger, a well-known Japanese-Australian voice actor, YouTuber, and more, and Megan Lee, a Korean American singer-songwriter.

There’s further projects of note. This includes various series by LGBTQ creators.²⁶ For instance, there’s an animated series such as *Scrappers*, *Swift Spark and the Defense Five*,

²⁵ Some Newgrounds series that ended include [Interface](#) (ended in October 2021) and [Monster Lab](#) (ended in December 2021). Some films on Newgrounds that have aired include [Heartbreak](#) (2022), [Winter Blues](#) (2022), [The World of Literal Hat](#) (2022), [Home](#) (2022), [Tales from Scorchwater Valley](#) (2022), [The Wind Whistles](#) (2021), [The Wait](#) (2021), [Gilded Guy Gets Up](#) (2021), [Butch](#) (2021), and [Hot Salsa](#) (2020).

²⁶ There’s a series by [queer writer Stephanie "Steph"](#) about an ambitious space pilot [named](#) *Space Pilots* and a queer western action- romance story [entitled](#) *Limbo* by a trans man named [Inukuma](#). Also there’s a LGBTQ animated series named *Summoners*, created by a gay man named [Blurzy](#), who describes it [as "about a bisexual boy who lives in a world with magical abilities and a futuristic time frame"](#). There’s a series by a abrosexual art hobbyist named *Violet* [about a trans elf girl](#), a sweet girls love film directed by Sophie Feher entitled *Piece of Cake*, and Inukuma’s *Romancing Roslyn Cherry*.

Birdboys, and *Novas*. *Scrappers* and *Birdboys* are by trans women, Charlie Gultiano-Wyton and Danielle Maxine specifically. *Swift Spark and the Defense Five* is by a trans man, Pan. *Novas* is by [a queer and trans artist](#), Jesse. *Scrappers* is being produced by Gultiano-Wyton's animation studio, Variation Media.

Swift Spark and the Defense Five is by artist and animator, Pan, who loves *Phineas & Ferb*, and is [based on](#) a comic of the same name. *Birdboys* is by artist and animator, Danielle, with [some teasers](#) posted on her YouTube channel. *Novas* is the personal project [of Jesse](#), a SCAD student, who posted a casting call for the animation [on Tik Tok](#). What Avara, mentioned earlier in this article, [stated](#) is relevant here: support for indie creators is necessary if you “want to see diversity in animation”. Part of that is LGBTQ representation.



Just as exciting are the shows by Black creators. I've mentioned a few in this post already, including Creative Theory, Brandon Wright, Wisdom Nunn, Lucha Vandross, Nya, and Pia. For one, there's a 2D animated series named [Jumbie](#), produced by a small studio in Trinidad and Tobago, [GemGfx Animation Studios](#). Originally scheduled for release in February of this year, the *Jumbie* pilot was [delayed](#) to February 2023, because the studio was working on a music video for “A Better Tomorrow”, a song by Mark Loquan, featuring Terri Lyons, which came out [in April](#). With that, *Jumbie* is going forward.

In addition, there is an animated hip-hop musical entitled [Battu](#), which is scheduled to become an animated series [on Cartoon Network](#). The latter has also [picked up a show](#) drawing from Nigerian culture entitled *Iyanu: Child of Wonder* to be overseen by a Black-owned animation studio, Lion Forge Animation. Before Disney Branded Television was [headed](#) by Ayo Davis, a Black woman, it agreed to pick up *Iwájú*. The latter is [an Africanfuturist series](#) set in Lagos, Nigeria. Disney is co-producing it with Kugali Media, a Pan-African entertainment company.

There are many other Black indie creators. There's Vampire Nwt's suspense mystery show [entitled Blackwater Creek](#). It has queer Afro-Latine leads named after magic, monsters, and fruits! Even more exciting is [Captain Zero](#). It is an action drama [about](#) a social media-obsessed superhero named Captain Zero who "must find the cause of his depression-fueled blackouts in order to save his city and himself." The series is created by a Black [non-binary](#) illustrator, filmmaker, and writer, [Lamard Cher-Aimé](#). It is produced by a Black-owned animation company, [Cutting Edge Animation](#).

This animated series tackles "mental health in the Black community, identity," according to [Cher-Aimé](#). Currently, five seasons, 4 specials, and a feature film for *Captain Zero* [are planned](#). The show's GoFundMe states that with enough money it [can turn](#) the show into a reality. The show, and another produced by Cutting Edge Animation, [Space Friends](#), are often promoted by Cher-Aimé. They often ask their followers to name show characters, and showcase series art and related merchandise. Interviews, Q&As, and further pull in potential viewers on the show's YouTube channel.

Recently, a short five-minute film entitled "Captain Zero: Into The Abyss", funded in part by Chromatic Black's [Ida B. Wells fund](#), aired. It stars the Black trans actress Angelica Ross, who is the film's executive producer. The film focuses on a therapy session of Xerxes Hughes, aka Captain Zero, with Dr. Niobe (voiced by Ross). It was [posted on the show's YouTube](#) channel. It is within a video that is about 1 hour, 50-minute video, complete with mental health professionals, Ross, Cher-Aimé, and others talked about the film, Black representation in animation and comics, mental health, and many other topics.

These series prove what Ashley Nichols [said](#): that "anyone can tell an amazing story." It also [seems to prove](#) that people with vision and passion can make "god tier animation". Amazing animation doesn't always need a "studio behind it with a million dollars." There is [no clear](#)

[answer](#) for making indie animation viable. After all, people can [still steal](#) content of an indie animation and profit off it.

Even so, some [have supported](#) waiting longer for series to come to fruition, giving those producing it more time to rest, polish their ideas, and make the shows better. Furthermore, there is no doubt that corporate media [fails to represent](#) many aspects of society, with indie animation making cooler content despite the [need for funds](#). There are the continual challenges of people not taking animation [seriously](#).

Unsurprisingly, there have been [calls](#) for a website for indie animated series which works like Webtoon. The *Animation for Adults* site [proposed](#) an awards show just for indie animation. Creator Nation promoted a [Discord server](#) for indie creators, indie animated shows, and indie comics. Some [noted](#) news of Netflix's [war with its animation](#) department by letting go many of its animation employees. Many creators responded by sharing their series or pilots in the process.

Creators have seen indie animation [as the way to go](#). Some [said](#) that creators should do promos for other indie animations or [said](#) that now is the most important time to support, and follow, indie projects. This is coupled with the realization (and recognition) that those in the animation industry [don't have stable jobs](#).

Then, there's Project City, created by Rad Sechrist, well-known as the showrunner of *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts*. In February, [I argued](#) that Project City has "the potential to expand the indie animation space beyond...often crowdfunded series on YouTube". I stated that it allows for "more independence for creators in the series, movies, music, or shows they create." While it [is amazing](#) that Sechrist is funding, [and creating](#), his next film (*The Brave War*), co-created with Andra Gunter and Daniel Rojas, independently, progress on the platform is somewhat slow.

There was lukewarm reception to [his idea](#) that people who buy shares in a project "have the right to make and sell merch" but have to "drop profits back into our system that distributes to all IP owners". Some about the [potential use](#) of NFTs, which Sechrist realized was a good point. He is [strongly against](#) NFTs and for good reason. Others called it "[iffy](#)", said the execution [could be tricky](#), or [worried](#) it could set a bad precedent. On the other hand, there were those more receptive to Sechrist's idea.

Project City now emphasizes its role as an animation school, including 15-minute lectures [on various topics](#), and is [now defined](#) as a "project based platform for learning how to

create animation.” Back in March, Sechrist [said](#) they are continuing with F-IP (fractional IP), where people could buy shares of an IP, but are not using Blockchain or NFT, and stated they would be launching it within the next month. That did not happen. The idea continues to be developed. [A tweet](#) from the project’s account used the #FIP hashtag on June 24. But there haven’t been many more updates beyond that, as Sechrist last mentioned it in a tweet [on January 7](#).

On the other hand, [on June 18](#), Sechrist said that they have been wanting to take steps [toward](#) making Project City “a streaming platform of creators learning and sharing their process/knowledge.” He [added](#) that Project City takes “no ownership of IP people post.” Anyone can post and delete any video they have posted. In addition, he said they [were considering](#) allowing people to post 1-minute clips on the site. Ultimately, Project City may be part of what Avara [describes](#), giving people a platform who wouldn’t have it “in the traditional studio setting”. More fundamentally, it is part of allowing creators to share stories on their [own terms](#).



A few other indie animations are worth noting. Take for example, a comedy sci-fi music series named [Starstruck](#), surrealist cyberpunk anime [named Dreamcatchers](#), and an animated young adult [horror mystery](#) named *Black Pines*. There’s artist and animator Tamara’s [Starmakers series](#) (with a [bisexual](#) girl named Astra), and storyboarder Kaitrin Snodgrass’s seeming space opera, [Buckwild](#).

There's also a young adult action-adventure fantasy film named [The Will of Monsters](#), by filmmaker and animator [Christopher Wade](#), an animated project named [Big Cat Bandits](#), and about globe-traveling cat thieves "resisting an evil world-conquering empire with crime". It was exciting to learn about 2D freelance animator Nadia Dar's series [based on](#) growing up mixed race entitled [Brighter](#), and an animated series [named Ironface](#) "steeped in 80s pop culture...part Terminator, and all NIGHTMARE" according to the [show's teaser](#). Others are just as intriguing, such as an action-comedy named [Defender Squad](#) about an alien woman who crash lands on Earth and "joins a low ranking two-person hero team" [according](#) to series creator Royal Wildfire.

These series, and many others,²⁷ are examples of creating animation without connections to big companies. These creators aren't on "[puppet strings](#)". Unlike series produced made by big companies, indie animations [obviously depend](#) on people's support, due to [lack of support](#) from the industry unsurprisingly. The indie animations are often shared by their creators, following the [basic marketing advice](#) some shared about small indie creative projects. Still, it is worth remembering, as *The Owl House* creator and bisexual animator Dana Terrace once pointed out, "[nothing is precious in animation](#)."

This makes me think about a Russian indie series about a family of Metalheads entitled [Metal Family](#). It seems to have stopped for the time being. Western sanctions on Russia limited financial options available to Russians. They resulted in challenges for the show's staff in getting money necessary for the show's continuation. From comments on the [Metal Family subreddit](#), I get the impression that the series is a rut now and won't be coming out anytime soon. Presumably work on episodes is going forward, but slowly. My enthusiasm for the series dissipated after a character used an anti-gay slur [unnecessarily](#) and no one attempted to improve the dialogue.

On a more positive note, there are creators such as a 2D Thai animator named KAGO, and an indie feature animation director, [Fnook](#). Indie animation studios Cloudrise Pictures, [Paper Panther](#), [Tapocketa](#), [Krispy Animation](#), and [Bandit Mill](#) are producing animations. The latter is [working](#) to create "unique, different adult animation" such as *The Boys of Boxtown*. Bitter

²⁷ Likely *Bloop and Friends*, *Frootoon's Project Tideaway*, [LZbros' The Alyssian](#), Feldman's *Accidental Gehenna*, [Régis \(Reggie\) Camargo's Hockey, Love And GUTS!](#), [CheesyTrishy's Dragon Falls and Crime Time](#), [Sophie Bergers' Framed](#), Artixi's *Destination Unknown*, BBGannon's *Alfred the Alien*, Shiloh's *Zeyka*, Poolustrations' *The Cosmos in your Eyes*, Gabis' [The Fantastic Warriors](#), Courtney's *Sorein*, Rebecca's *Royal Pain*, [Crescent Fire](#), and Brady's [Crash in the System](#) are moving forward.

Animation [is making](#) a pilot named *Stranger* and [many other animations](#). The [indie animated studio](#), Sunflower Club, is going forward with *Little Wolf* and *Life in Hell*.

There are many other series in the works. This includes [DynamoToon](#)'s sci-fi fantasy comedy [named](#) *Horizonauts*. There's also a queer Colombian-American 2D artist and animator named TopsyJHearts [creating](#) a series entitled *The Evil Little Thing*, and an animated series named *The Porcelain Prince* [by Gabrielle Teaford](#). Also of note is an unnamed sci-fi crime drama "heavily inspired by Avatar and RWBY" [by Keelan270](#), and Animation Emfatuation's *Crime!*, a short film [in the process](#) about knightlights and teddy bears which fight monsters at night entitled *Knightlights & Teddy Bears*.

It is worth pointing to a 2D-animated cartoon with slapstick and adventure entitled [The Incredible Adventures of Detective Cat](#), an [independent drama](#) named *GrindCove*, Angye Burman's [Real Fantasy: Fight for the Past](#) which focuses on four teens who try to figure out their future while "fighting off evil...and struggling with school". Then there's a series [by an animator](#), Shorter, named *Gangs for Rent*. It is an animated sitcom about gangsters, with LGBTQ people, those on the spectrum, and with mental disorders.

There are many other indie animated series out there,²⁸ some of which aren't in this article despite my best efforts to find as many series as I could. Cartoon Crave [promotes](#) some of these series on Twitter. [Supporting indie animation](#) is important to provide a viable alternative to often stifling studio system which ingests shows and spits them out. Likely the indie animation boom will continue as companies continue to cut animators and cancel shows.

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²⁸ Take, for example, animator and illustrator Colleen Gundersen's [unnamed series](#), an animated pilot [by @LSMark_](#), and *Legends of Myiorda* (Myiorda No Shinwa), an original anime by [Eternal Arts Studios](#). *Century Park* remains in the lurch because they [haven't found](#) an Indigenous teen to voice the protagonist, the [pilot](#) of *The Heroes of Tomorrow* is moving ahead, as is *Wolves of Cecila*, and *The Shadow Marked*. Cartoon Connect is working [on Lil Ron Ron](#). There have been no updates on Ana/Dami's *Harri's World* since January 2021 nor *Dark Pages* since [December 2021](#), or *Re:Quest*. The studio [producing the series](#) stated the cast would be announced in November 2021, but that did not happen. Although there haven't been any updates for some time, [The Descendants](#) animated series may be moving forward.

Chapter 5: Gods' School Review



Gods' School is an indie animated series. It has elements of fantasy, mythology, and romance. 2D French animator Gaylord Cuvillier Philippe Libessart is the series creator. It received support from the French National Center for Cinema and Animation in 2018. Currently, [seven episodes](#) have aired on YouTube. *This review will have spoilers.*

This series, which began airing in January 2019, is centered on Olympian gods. It is inspired [by Greek mythology](#) in Homer's *Iliad* and Hesiod's *Theogony*. The primary protagonist, Eris (voiced by Morgan Berry), is a teenage goddess of discord trying to find her place among the gods on Mount Olympus. This all changes when she meets Paris (voiced by Brandon Winckler), a young human on Mount Olympus. Both contend with the goddesses of beauty and love (Aphrodite), wisdom and battle (Athena), and marriage and family (Hera). Eris is helped by a sphinx named Sfiga (voiced by Lizzie Freeman).

The animation of this series [is smooth](#), which fits with the adorable and cool nature of the animation itself, and its talented voice cast. Apart from those previously mentioned, there's Lizzie Freeman, Kira Buckland, Keenan Spencer, and Deneen Melody, who voice Aphrodite, Athena, Hera, and Demeter respectfully. Others, such as Melissa Sternberg, Ivy Dupler, Michele Knotz, Sean Chiplock, and Griffin Puatu lend their voices to the characters of Eos, Iris, Minthe,

Persephone "Poppy", Apollo, and Ares, to give a few examples of the many characters within this series.

The first episode of *Gods' School* throws the viewer right into the action. Smart alecky talking columns, known as caryatids, claim to be sacred guardians of Olympus. They are hilariously scared off by Sfiga. It is easy to be drawn into the story, whether interpersonal conflicts or relationships between the gods. The story is set up so that the viewer sympathizes with Eris, when Hera claims she is sneaky and cruel.

This exuberance is offset by the snobbishness of some goddesses, who detest humans, and jealousy. The latter is the case in the competition between Minthe and Persephone "Poppy", who both like Hades. In some ways, *Gods' School* shares themes [with *Lore Olympus*](#), an ongoing popular webcomic by Rachel Smythe, although her webcomic has a fundamentally different perspective. As for *Gods' School*, these themes are reinforced by a careful focus on drama and music. The latter by Gold Tiger and SleepWalker.

Unlike other series based in Greek mythology, the characters in this series are [all teenagers](#), and in a school environment like that *Ever After High*, except it is not as glitzy. As such, it is markedly tamer than mature series [like *Blood of Zeus*](#). It is more akin to Disney series in that kids and family could watch this series with ease. This is not a surprise since the show's creator has said that Ariel, in *The Little Mermaid* (recently in the news because the [live-action film adaptation](#)), is [his favorite character](#).

The importance of setting boundaries is a key theme. This is shown through Poppy's push against romantic advances by Hades. Eris also tells Paris to not touch Sfiga and treat her like a cat (and pet), but a living being. *Gods' School* makes clear that possessiveness is not acceptable. For instance, Poppy, who is easily influenced and intimidated, is pressured by Minthe to leave Hades alone. Although Minthe declares that Hades is hers exclusively, Poppy still wants to be with Hades.



Like other fictional school environments, certain characters fulfill the "bad girl" and "bad boy" tropes. Some of those characters [are bullies](#) and their actions are not shown positively. Mount Olympus is not a peaceful place, but filled with discord. For example, Zeus commands Artemis to stay behind, even though she wants to fight the invaders of Mount Olympus.

The series promotes the value of self-acceptance, by stating that [outcasts](#) should not be rejected and that people should be true to themselves. All the while, men who flaunt their power for fun and two-timing men are criticized. In fact, the show's official Twitter account posted [a video](#) of Eris cutting her hair with two women's rights hashtags, while Artemis has a [squad-of-sorts](#).

There is no easy division between good and evil in *Gods' School*. For instance, the Aloids want to take over Olympus, but would-be evildoers are scary and mysterious. For instance, Eris goes through a moral dilemma and lives with the consequences of telling Paris to go back to "where he came from", words which haunt her to no end. This dilemma first begins in the show's third episode, even going on a quest to find him while Olympus is under attack, but it fades after he is found injured. At the same time, Nyx, her mother, and goddess of night, is lording over her. She reminds me a bit of [Orizaba in *Elena of Avalor*](#).

There are many secrets that each of the gods, and goddesses, try and keep from one another. To give one example, in the fourth episode, everyone is trying to stop Echo (voiced by

Deneen Melody) from revealing unflattering information. Hera even mutes her, preventing her from speaking first ever again. This has a disastrous side effect that Hera never realized: it prevents her from warning those on Olympus about the coming danger!

Unlike other series, [Gods' School](#) features a disabled character, who uses a cane: Hephaestus (voiced by John Choi Carter). Premiering in the fifth episode, he listens to Aphrodite after her arguments with Ares, and tries to be understanding, after she enters his workshop. This humanizes him. It shows that the gods are not superhuman but can be physically disabled just like anyone else. In a conveyance that everyone is unique, he says that everyone has something that makes them special "even if they don't see it", which fits with the other themes of this series.

As one of the only indie animations [currently airing](#), apart from [Helluva Boss](#) and *Eddsworld*, *Gods' School* already stands out from animations made by well-known and prominent companies, which I've often reviewed since I began writing pop culture reviews in 2020. The series' background designers, including Gavin O'Donnell and Libessart, also the animator and director, are skilled. Their work is showcased on [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), and [Instagram](#). As such, it is no surprise that some have even gone to the effort to draw fan art or [fan fiction](#) of the show's characters.

[The series](#) has aired in various languages. The English adaptation was headed [by Brandon Winckler](#) and [Jenny Yokobori](#). There are different voice actors, including in French. There are also different episodes with French dubs, which means that the cast, and those who work on the series, is that much larger.

It is interesting that not all the episodes are necessarily sequential. Some of the shorter episodes focus on the growing relationship between Hephaestus and Aphrodite, the first meeting between Minthe and Hades, and the story of Hades with his previous lover, Leuke. While these episodes might be seen [as "filler"](#), they provide information which helps expand the story.



There is something missing through all of this: LGBTQ characters. There may be implied characters. Possibly, there is subtext between Paris and the person who brought him to Mount Olympus, Aeolos. However, no one is outwardly queer, as far as I can tell. So, that is an area for improvement.

Even so, there are people of color in the cast. Take, for example [Kayla Pitts](#), who voices [a nymph](#), John Choi who voices Hades, and Griffin Puatu who voices Ares. If [High Guardian Spice](#), *Young Justice*, and *She-Ra and the Princesses of Power* can have Black characters, then any series can have such characters. Hopefully, more characters of color appear in the future. After all, the show's creator previously [condemned](#) racism, White supremacy, and called for equal rights in a social media thread.

Although the series may not [reach](#) the original goal of "an animated webseries project of 25 episodes" at 12 minutes long as [the original Kickstarter](#) for the series, stated, due to various factors, there is no doubt that *Gods' School* will continue. The quality remains at a strong level, for a project primarily [spearheaded by Libessart](#). This is evidenced in the [latest episode](#) which focuses on Nyx (voiced by Emily Wallace), dreaded goddess of night, and strained family dynamics. Although it appears this is all a nightmare dreamt of by Eris, her concerns appear to be dismissed. At first, Medusa (voiced by Crystal Jade Vaughan) asks if she is ok. Then she says she needs to "get it together" so she can sleep, making Eris feel bad about herself.

The episode raises several questions. Was any of Eris dreamed about real? Can the balance between light and dark be disrupted? Nyx would likely love to do the latter, and unseat the goddess of day, Hemera, or Helios the Sun. She may be content in her castle shrouded in dark clouds. Furthermore, the nightmare makes me think that Eris has deeper problems which are manifesting themselves in her dreams.

The recent episode introduced new voice actors like Hannah Reed (as Little Eris) and Laila Berzins (as Hypnos). The next episode is scheduled for Fall 2023. It will likely be listed on [the page](#) for the series on TV Time. That app was one way I learned about the new episode premiere.

This series is more than a lovely series with amazing visuals showing the talent and passion behind it. For one, there is an amazing group [of characters](#) and the [use of Toonboom](#) for animation of the series. Secondly, the [favorite character](#) of the series creator in *The Iliad* is Cassandra. She is described as a "cursed Trojan princess".

It would be great to see [Cassandra](#) in a future episode. When I heard the character's name, I thought of the similarly named character in *Tangled: The Series* (also known as *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*). That Cassandra who had a major part in the series as the lady-in-waiting for Princess Rapunzel. That character is [mentally manipulated](#) by a demon named Zhan Tri [to manifest](#) her anger against Rapunzel [in a violent](#), destructive manner. In that series, that Cassandra is a complex [lesbian-coded](#) character [exploited](#) by the aforementioned demon. It is not known if the Cassandra within *Gods' School* will go down a similar path or how her character will be different from other fictional Cassandras.

I am hopeful that *Gods' School* will get [even better](#) as it moves forward, earning it an even-higher rating on [IMDB](#) and other online review sites. Brandon Winckler and Jenny Yokobori, who worked on previous episodes as show writers, and led the effort to adapt the episodes into English, from their original French. They are known for their voice roles in *Fena: Pirate Princess*, *Edens Zero*, *The Simpsons*, or *Central Park*.

The show's cast have voiced English dubs of characters [in Lycoris Recoil](#), *Titan's Bride*, *In the Land of Leadale*, [Komi Can't Communicate](#), *Re:Zero*, and *High-Rise Invasion*. Others have voiced characters in *Rainbow High*, [RWBY](#), *Nomad of Nowhere*, *Megaton Girl*, and *The Loud House*. Some cast members are new voice actors, like Vaughan.

With that all being said, I highly recommend *Gods' School*. I hope that it continues onward, with new episodes, characters, and plotlines.

Gods' School is currently streaming [on YouTube](#) and can be supported [on Patreon](#).

Animation	★★★★★
Voice Acting	★★★★★
Music	★★★★★
Story	★★★★★
5	
★★★★★	

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Concluding Words

I have written about indie animation on many occasions beyond these posts. For instance, [my short review](#) of *Helluva Boss*, my [review](#) of *Metal Family*, [my review](#) of *Ollie & Scoops*, a small mention in [my review](#) of *The Owl House*, or [comparison](#) between themes in *Human Kind Of* and those in some indie animations. I also mentioned indie animation within my posts about LGBTQ representation in animation in [2022](#) and [2021](#).

I have many other indie animations I plan to write about either this year or next year and creating this e-book has given me the determination to write those.

- Burkely

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